NATIONAL EDUCATION, THE QUESTION

OF QUESTIONS.

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by Henry Dunn.

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NATIONAL EDUCATION,

THE

QUESTION OF QUESTIONS;

BEING

AN APOLOGY FOR THE BIBLE

IN

Schools for the Nation:

WITH REMARKS ON

CENTRALIZATION AND THE VOLUNTARY SOCIETIES,

AND BRIEF NOTES ON

LORD BROUGHAM'S BILL.

By HENRY DUNN,

Secretary to the British and Foreign School Society.

SECOND EDITION.

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LONDON:

THOMAS WARD AND Co., 27, PATERNOSTER ROW.

1838.

One Shilling.

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LONDON:
J. C. KELLY, Printer, 32, Houndsditch.

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TO

THE SECOND EDITION.

A Second Edition of this Pamphlet having been called for, I avail myself of the opportunity thus afforded, to state, *that which is I hope already generally* understood, *—that the Committee of the British and Foreign School Society are not, as a Committee, to be held responsible either for the opinions therein contained, or for any particular form of expression which may have been chosen for their communication. On a subject involving so many considerations, and confessedly embarrassed by peculiar difficulties, it would, perhaps, be impossible to find any* body *of men inclined to adopt precisely the same views. It is to me a matter of surprise as well as of pleasure, that* so many *should have expressed their concurrence with the sentiments I have expressed.*

H. D.

February 1*st*, 1838.

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SECTION I.

THE STATE OF THE COUNTRY.

It will scarcely be disputed, that of late an unusual degree of interest has been manifested in various quarters on the subject of National Education. Within the last few months, public meetings have been held in various parts of the empire for the purpose of petitioning Parliament to make some legislative provision for the instruction of the people, and still more recently a bill has been introduced into the House of Lords, by Lord Brougham, for its immediate accomplishment. Under these circumstances, it cannot, I trust, be deemed impertinent to invite the attention of the friends of Education to the principles on which, in the judgment of many, such a measure can alone be safely based.*

That the existing provision for popular instruction is deficient in quantity, and in too many cases, still more defective in quality, must be admitted by all who are acquainted with the actual state of the country. The intellectual condition of the agricultural districts has been well described by a powerful and original writer as "a gloomy monotony;—death without

* On the particular bill now before Parliament, it would be premature to offer any observations. The country is deeply indebted to Lord Brougham for his indefatigable and enlightened exertions on behalf of the Education of the people. Whatever may be the fate of the present bill, —certainly the best that has yet been presented to the notice of Parliament,—the name of Lord Brougham will always be associated in the annals of the country with the history of its popular Education.

his dance." Shut out from every thing that can sustain or ennoble an intelligent nature, the peasantry of England have long since displayed, in unparalleled degradation, the full effects of knowledge denied, and have now sunk into a state of mental inanition and semi-barbarism, from which, it is to be feared, the present generation can never be recovered. Rude, selfish, superstitious and profane;—their sense of right and wrong limited and often perverted; insensible to enjoyments of a higher order than those which arise from the grosser forms of sensual gratification; and scarcely ever looking beyond the apparent interests of the present hour; the great mass live and die without an effort to raise themselves above the lowest conditions of animal existence.

In the towns a different state of things prevails, yet one scarcely less to be lamented, and probably more perilous to the peace of the community. The bulk of the labourers still remain in utter and hopeless ignorance; while the better class of artizans, only partially enlightened, are seldom found capable of enjoying a scientific lecture, a useful book, or a calm political disquisition. The oracle of the work-shop is the Sunday Newspaper. "Shrewd, intemperate, presumptuous, careless of the truth of their representations, provided they make an impression," the conductors of these mischievous productions too frequently pander to the prejudices, excite the passions, and deprave the imaginations of their readers, without conferring upon them any substantial benefit, beyond the mere communication of passing intelligence. For evils of this description, there is but one remedy;—the cultivation and enlargement of the popular mind.

That the most unlimited dispersion of knowledge could in itself ensure the advancement of wisdom and virtue, it would be absurd to pretend; but it cannot be disputed that "utter ignorance is the most effectual fortification to a vicious state of the mind, not only defeating the ultimate efficacy of the

means for making men wiser and better, but standing in preliminary defiance to the very application."

From these general observations probably few will be found to dissent. It is not on the value of Education itself that men now profess to differ,—in that respect "the darkness is past,"—but on the *nature* of the Education which should be imparted, and on the *means* by which its universality should be secured. The two points interlace each other; the settlement of the one, determining the decision of many in relation to the other.

On the question of MEANS, the friends of Education are divided into two classes:—

I. Those who hold that the spread of Education should be left to the voluntary efforts of the people.

II. Those who consider the promotion of public instruction to be the duty of the Government.

Each of these classes may be again sub-divided. The friends of THE VOLUNTARY SYSTEM into two sections:—

1. Those who dislike the *principle* of Government interference in all matters affecting the *moral* interests of the country.

2. Those who distrust the *working* of such measures.

The *former*, without being prepared to admit that Government can with propriety establish a *scriptural* system of instruction, dread and deprecate any plan by which the Bible should be excluded. The *latter* fear that Government interference would, in its immediate results, be injurious to the interests of religion, and, perhaps, ultimately lead to tyranny, by the controlling power it would give in the inculcation of opinions. By the *first* of these classes a Government education would be opposed as unjust; by the *last* as inexpedient.

The advocates of STATE INTERFERENCE may, in like manner, be divided into two parties:—

1. Those who wish to see both originating and controlling power vested in a Central Board.

2. Those who would confine the functionaries of Government to the aiding of Schools already in existence, or to the establishment of new ones in connection with local effort, on fixed and understood principles.

The first, represented by an association recently formed, under the title of "The Central Society of Education," contend that, "improvements must be enforced by the State;"* that, "Government ought to have the power of preventing individuals from acting as Schoolmasters, whose capacities have not been duly certified;"† that, it is just to use (compulsion,) "on the principles professed and acted on by all shades of German Governments."‡ The *last*, that the interference of Government should never extend beyond inspection, with consent of parties, and the granting or withholding of pecuniary aid on established conditions.

To evolve from these conflicting views and notions any principle which may reasonably be expected to meet with the concurrence of a sufficient number of persons to render its adoption wise, or even practicable, must evidently be a task of no ordinary difficulty. I am not presumptuous enough to imagine myself at all equal to such an undertaking. I should not venture to take a single step towards its accomplishment, did not the circumstances in which we are placed at this moment seem to demand that every man should give his most anxious attention to the subject, and at least do all he can to promote unity of sentiment.

In endeavouring to arrive at some satisfactory conclusion with respect to the principles on which Parliament might advantageously promote Schools for the working classes in England, we propose to shew:—

I. That if Government interfere at all in the Education

* First Pub. p. 21. † Ibid p. 14. ‡ Ibid p. 33.

of the people, it must do so rather by aiding and promoting voluntary efforts than by centralization and direct control.

II. That Education, in order to be useful, must be moral and religious, without being either sectarian or exclusive.

III. That the Bible is better adapted than any other book for general use in Schools; its introduction, without note or comment, involving us in fewer difficulties, and offering greater advantages, than any other plan that has yet been devised for the religious instruction of the population.

If these points can be successfully established, the path of duty will be plain. Good men of all parties must unite, to lay the foundations of public virtue and private happiness in the general Education of the people on scriptural and comprehensive principles. A system of instruction established on any other basis would be a public calamity, since it would not only supersede voluntary efforts, but convert public instruction either into an engine for the promotion of spiritual tyranny, or a channel for the propagation of latitudinarianism.

SECTION II.

CENTRALIZATION AND THE VOLUNTARY SOCIETIES.

The people of England, it is well known, have hitherto manifested a very salutary unwillingness to entrust the State with a greater degree of power than is requisite for carrying on the functions of civil Government. It has been their boast for ages, that while other nations have depended upon their Governments for the promotion of objects of public utility, they, the English people, have pressed forward in the march of improvement, alike unaided and unembarrassed by the State. From discoveries recently made, however, by some new friends to popular Education, it now appears that this, their way, has been their folly. No instruction at all, we are told, would have been far better than the scanty portion which they have contrived by their own efforts to gather for themselves. The voluntary system is thus described: "It leaves the amount, and still more the nature, of public Instruction to caprice or chance. It throws the reins on the neck of the courser and allows him his headlong or headstrong course at will. Anomalies and contradictions abound. Ignorance or knowledge, morality or immorality, become a mere matter of luck."* The remedy, however, is at hand. Government must come forward and deliver the people from themselves. Government must choose Schoolmasters,—select books,—and, in all respects, direct the Education of the country. "Is a Government," asks Mr. Wyse, "which should enlighten and *teach*, to yield to the prejudices and follies of a people *who are to be taught?*"

Such are the views now propagating through the country by the Central Society of Education. Adapted as they are only to a despotic Government, borrowed from a country

* First Pub. Central Society p. 37.

which, but yesterday, expatriated a whole village—the pastor and his flock—for daring to claim "freedom to worship God;" part and parcel of a system by which even *private teachers* are required to send notice to the Government of their change of residence, to give exact information of their terms, and, most monstrous of all, are forbidden to give "religious instruction," "*except by the permission of the ecclesiastical authorities;*" they are yet presented to Englishmen as worthy to be admired and imitated.

One extract will suffice to shew how these principles are expounded, when intended to be applied to this country. It is on the choice of teachers:—

"Not, then, in the hands of THE PEOPLE should be either the training or selection of public teachers; it is a task to which Government alone is competent, and which, for the sake of the people itself, the Government should boldly and largely assume." If the people are allowed to choose their own teachers, "the political partisan, the religious fanatic, the monied intriguer, will usually be the victor; the modest and virtuous scholar, of course, the vanquished." "To rescue Education from such abuse, to rescue the people from the people's passion and folly, is to render a good and great service both to the people and to Education. It is to interpose between their true and false, their temporary and permanent interest. To effect this we require *external*, *compressing*, and *repressing* power, an intelligence fully adequate to comprehend the universal interest, a solicitude to provide impartially for it, and an energy and activity to carry such provision into execution. Is this to be found in the people,—in sections of the people,—in the people ignorant,—in the people excited? Where are we to look for it but to the Government?"

It may well be asked, what terrible discovery brings Mr. Wyse and his friends to conclusions so strange as those to which we have adverted? I know not. *Why* we should betake ourselves to measures so foreign to the habits and feelings of the nation; so liable to abuse; tending so directly

to the worst of all tyrannies,—the enslaving of public sentiment, is a question I confess myself utterly unable to answer. I can discover no imaginable reason why we should thus toss at the feet of any Government an amount of moral influence, the possession of which, under some circumstances, might lead to the destruction of our liberties.

Many reasons however might be mentioned why a different course should be adopted; why voluntary efforts, instead of being repressed, should be encouraged; why existing societies should be upheld, and why the power of selecting teachers, and directing Education should, under all circumstances, rest with the people. To some of these as deduced from the experience of other States, I beg the candid attention of the reader.

CONNECTICUT, U. S.

"At a very early period, the State of Connecticut was divided into parochial societies, whose limits sometimes comprised the whole of a town (township), and sometimes only a part of it.

"In May 1717, these societies were empowered by the Legislature to levy taxes on their inhabitants, and to make regulations for the support of Schools. Considerable appropriation was made from the public treasury to aid in this object, until May 1795, when the avails of certain lands (now forming a part of the State of Ohio) amounting to $1,200,000, were appropriated to the maintenance of Schools throughout the State, and the annual product made liable to a perpetual distribution for the purpose. In various ways this sum has gradually increased to upwards of $1,700,000, and about $70,000 are now annually distributed for the support of Schools.

"Previous to the appropriation no general system existed, but every society adopted its own method of Instruction, rarely resorting to the power of taxation, except for the erection of School-houses. In the country towns the employment of the children was chiefly agriculture. In the warm seasons the children who were of sufficient age were employed in the labors of husbandry, and in winter were generally kept at School. For one-third or half the year teachers

were employed in almost every neighbourhood in the State; and reading, writing, and the rules of arithmetic, adapted to ordinary use, were understood by almost every child at the age of fourteen years, throughout the state. In these Schools morning and evening prayers, and religious instruction, were almost universal, and conduced, not a little, to inspire an early respect for the principles of morality and religion.

"When the appropriation was made in 1795, the territories composing ecclesiastical societies were formed into *School societies;* and when convened in that capacity possessed no power, except in regard to the regulations of common Schools. This change became very proper, and even necessary. Originally, the inhabitants of the territory were of one religious denomination, and the same individuals had a common interest in all its concerns, both religious and secular: but at that period the great diversity which had arisen in the course of time gave rise to a new corporation, of the same territorial limits, for the regulation of Schools. As early as 1766 the several societies in the State were authorized to divide their territory into School districts; and when the act of 1795 was passed, that power had been exerted, and districts formed in almost every part of the State.

"The outline of the system now existing is briefly this:—every School society is required to hold an annual meeting, and elect a clerk, a treasurer, a committee to direct and manage their concerns; a committee for each School district within their limits; and a number of persons, not exceeding nine, of competent skill in letters, to be overseers or visitors of the several district Schools. The districts are legal corporations, with power to levy a tax for the erection or repair of a School-house, furnishing it with all proper accommodations, and supplying the School with fuel: the teacher is elected by the committee for the district appointed by the society, with the assent of the district; but is not allowed *(by the statute)* to commence his duties until he has been examined and approved by the visitors. The visitors have a general discretionary power to prescribe regulations, and they may at any time displace the teacher. It is made their duty to visit the Schools at certain periods—to exact such exercises and exhibitions as may enable them to judge of

the proficiency of the pupils—and to superintend and direct the general course of instruction.

"Each society may institute, within its limits, a School of a higher order for Instruction in the highest branches of literature. This appertains to no district, but its privileges are common to the whole society; and it derives a proportional share, according to its number of pupils, of the revenues of the School fund, payable to the Society.

"The School fund is managed by a single commissioner, who pays to the treasurer of the State its annual net proceeds. Twice in each year the treasurer transmits to the several societies in the State, which have conformed to the requirements of the law, the sums then in the treasury, proportioned to the number of children in each society, between the ages of four and sixteen; ascertaining, by actual enumeration: but not until the society's committee have first certified that the monies previously received from the Treasury for the like purpose, have been *wholly* expended in paying and boarding teachers, who were duly examined and approved, and whose schools have been kept in all respects according to law. The monies are also distributed amongst several districts in each society by a similar proportion."

On this statement the able Editor of the American Annals of Education, makes the following remarks:—

"A system, so excellent as that which is here faithfully described, sustained by funds more ample we suspect, than are provided for any other community of the same number, would very naturally be expected to produce the most happy results; but we have more than once expressed our conviction that the condition of Education in this state, when compared with its improvement in other respects, is no better than it was before the fund was provided, nor even as good. Instruction had indeed been in a very excellent condition for a long period. For sixty years, not an individual was known to appear before the court of justice who could not write his name; but we are assured, that in one town, at least one member of a School *Committee* was recently found, who could not write, and there have been very many whose knowledge of arithmetic was

limited to addition and substraction of simple numbers. *The effect of this fund has been that which may always be expected, where he who is able and habituated to earn his own subsistence, is supplied with the means of living without exertion.* The State, by its bounty, has virtually declared that parents need no longer pay for the instruction of their children, (that is for their tuition): and the habit, and the sense of obligation to do their duty, were destroyed together. The State has been made exclusively responsible, and it has too extensively been deemed sufficient to provide such teachers as the fund would pay for.

"We beg our readers to understand that in these, and the following statements, we refer *to the majority* of sixteen hundred School districts of Connecticut, and *not to all.* We *know* that there are *many*—we hope *several hundred honorable exceptions;* and it is worthy of remark that (other things being equal) those districts, which either from necessity or choice, depend most on their own exertions have the best Schools."

Now let us contrast with the above, the position of things elsewhere.

STATE OF NEW YORK.

"In this great State a fund has been established, yielding only $100,000 annually; little more than the product of the School Fund of Connecticut. In 1816, when the distribution of the School Fund was commenced, the whole number of school districts in New York was 2,755, the whole number of children 176,449, and of these only 140,106 were instructed. In 1834, we learn from the present report, that the whole number of districts is 9,690, from 9,107 of which returns have been received, containing 522,618 persons from five to sixteen years of age, and giving instruction to 512,475. Ninety new districts have been formed during the past year, and 266 have been added to the number that have made returns.

"The amount paid to teachers for public schools, is stated by the superintendent to be $677,429,44 by the aid of $100,000 from the State, and the whole amount expended for instruction in public and private institutions is calculated at $1000,000. It would thus appear that the State of New York, by contributing $19\frac{3}{4}$ cents for the in-

struction of each pupil, leads its citizens to contribute more than a dollar for each child, and inspires them with proportionate zeal for the extension and improvement of their schools.

"On the other hand, the State of Connecticut, by distributing a dollar for each pupil from its fund, has induced many districts to give up all efforts and contributions; and has encouraged the employment of inferior teachers and the neglect of duty in organizing and superintending the schools.

"Experience in other States has proved, what has been abundantly confirmed by our own, that too large a sum of money distributed among the common schools has no salutary effect. Beyond a certain point the voluntary contributions of the inhabitants decline in amount with almost uniform regularity, as the contributions from a public fund increase. In almost every case in which a town possesses a local fund, the amount paid for teacher's wages, above the public money, is about as much less, compared with other towns having no local fund, as the amount received from that source."

The following observations from the pen of President Wayland, of Brown University, strikingly confirm the statement, that the disbursement of large funds in furtherance of Education is by no means productive of unmixed good.

"'It is generally supposed that legislative efforts should be directed to the accumulation and distribution of large funds to be appropriated to Education. I am disposed to believe that this opinion is erroneous. Funds are valuable in this case as a *condiment,* not as an *aliment.* They should never be so large as to render a considerable degree of personal effort on the part of the parent unnecessary. The universal law of divine providence in the distribution of its favors is *quid pro quo.* The adoption of any other, except in the case of absolute helplessness, is, so far as I have observed, pernicious. Witness the effect of funds for the support of the ministry. A fund is only useful, in this sort of case, in so far as it induces men to help themselves. If they will help themselves without it, so much the better. As soon as they are aware of the value of education, and it has elevated them to a certain point of moral acquisition,

they will not want it; nay, if it be continued after they have arrived at this point, I think it may be injurious in its effects.' "

"The correctness of these views has been fully exemplified in the State of Connecticut, which has a fund of 1,700,000 dollars. One of her most able statesmen, the Hon. R. M. Sherman, observes in a letter recently published:

" 'A public fund for the instruction of youth in common Schools, is of no comparative worth, as a means of relieving want. A higher value would consist in its being made *an instrument for exciting general exertion* for the attainment of that important end. In proportion as it excites and fosters a salutary zeal, it is a public blessing. It may have, on any other principle of application, a contrary tendency and become worse than useless. It may be justly questioned whether the School fund has been of any use in Connecticut. It has furnished a supply, where there was no deficiency. Content with the ancient standard of School Instruction, the people have permitted the expense of sustaining it to be taken off their hands, and have aimed at nothing higher. They expended about an equal sum before the School fund existed.' "

"This statement was fully confirmed by the general opinion at the late State convention in Connecticut, and it is doubted by few, that while the fund *might* be made an eminent blessing to the State, its actual influence on the condition of Schools is paralyzing."

From these important documents much may be learned if we are disposed to profit by the lessons they inculcate. In Connecticut we see an arrangement in many respects resembling our own, gradually superseded by a State system, as unobjectionable in its character as can well be imagined; one indeed from which *all parties* evidently anticipated the happiest effects. We wait and watch, as thirty or forty years roll on, during which, in the expressive language of Scripture, "One generation passeth away and another generation cometh," and we then ask for the result. The reply is instructive. *Education throughout the State, when compared with its improvement in other respects, has retrograded!* The State has assumed responsibilities which properly belong

to the parent, and as an inevitable consequence, "the habit and the sense of obligation," on the part of the natural guardians of the child, have been destroyed together.

Again we observe another State, its population increasing from without, as well as by the operation of natural causes, with a rapidity unexampled in the history of nations,—possessed of public funds for promoting instruction to an amount scarcely exceeding £20,000 annually, actually succeeding by the mere force of its own internal energy, in the short space of eighteen years, in more than trebling the number of children under Education, having secured to itself, in the mean time, the best teachers, the best system of organization and superintendence, and in all respects the best Schools.

Such examples ought not to be lost upon us. The absolute certainty which exists, that voluntary contributions will decline just in proportion as grants of public money are increased, and (which is of far greater importance) that this will be accompanied by a corresponding declension in benevolent zeal and interest as to the extension and improvement of Education, should alone make us pause before we adopt measures which, instead of promoting, may ultimately defeat the great end we have in view. I do not now refer to the increased burdens which, by any State system, must be thrown upon an already over-taxed people; I do not speak of the folly of choking up, in one direction at least, the ever widening channels of an expanding charity;—for money is not worth a thought when compared with the life, the intellectual and moral life of a child: I refer simply and exclusively to *the accomplishment of the object*, and viewing the subject in this light alone, I feel justified in saying, that *it is by no means certain* that any extended interference on the part of Government would be productive of that unmixed good which its sanguine advocates are so ready to anticipate.

One thing, at least, is clear,—Education in a free country

like our own can never be promoted by the recognition of despotic principles. Despotism to be beneficial must be thorough; any attempt to assume, in one particular department, an amount of power which is inconsistent with the nature and genius of the constitution of the country in which it is to be exercised, is sure to end in the discomfiture of those who are mad enough to imagine that blind submission may consist with a love of freedom, or a theory which rivets the chains of despotism with the habits and feelings of men who rejoice in the possession of their liberties.

Whatever, therefore, is done by the Government, *and I am by no means one of those who think that nothing additional is required,* must be attempted on the principle of aiding and exciting local effort; must tend to the increase rather than the diminution of voluntary beneficence; and above all, must provide for that constant and watchful supervision, without which, the occasional visits of an inspector, however important, could never entitle either the Schools or the teachers to public confidence.

To a certain extent Government has already recognized the principle of aiding existing efforts. The grants which have been made by Parliament towards the erection of School Houses, and disbursed by the Lords of the Treasury on the recommendations of the two societies, have on this ground been allotted with especial reference to the amount of local contributions. That this plan has not worked so well as was at first anticipated, is to be attributed to errors of detail. Invariably to give in proportion to sums raised by local contribution, irrespective of varying circumstances, is surely unwise; while the absence of any adequate security that *efficient* schools will be carried on in the buildings thus erected, is obviously a serious defect in the arrangement. Perhaps some modification of this system, by which it might be made, as Lord Brougham has urged,—"capable of contraction, expansion, variation and adaptation," would after

all, in the present circumstances of the country, be most likely to accomplish the great end in view:—the universal Education of the people. Abstractedly considered, it is not the best plan that might be devised; but viewed practically, it is probably the only one, which in the present position of parties, could fairly be carried into effect. In no other way is there the slightest probability of retaining any considerable portion of the amount which is now provided by voluntary subscriptions.

Without *an organized system of school inspection* however, no plan could operate beneficially; but this can only be effected by *consent of parties.* The advantageous position which the two societies occupy for effecting so important an object, by the exercise of moral influence, is at once the most obvious and the most powerful reason why Government should spare no pains to secure their cordial co-operation.

"The expediency of having a MINISTER OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION depends upon the powers with which he is entrusted. As an officer forming a connecting link between the Government and the country, and holding a *bureau* of central communication and general intercourse; as the *visitor* for statistical purposes of all public seminaries and educational establishments; as a collector of educational facts, and a depository of suggestions relative to Education, with a view to the supply of deficiencies and the extension of benefits,"* the appointment of such a functionary might be of great advantage. A "*Schoolmaster General* of the British Dominions" would only excite jealousy and paralyze effort.

* British Critic, No. xliv.

SECTION III.

THE RELIGIOUS DIFFICULTY.

"MAN," says an eloquent American writer, "may master nature, to become in turn its slave. Civilization, so far from being able of itself to give moral strength and elevation, includes causes of degradation which nothing but the religious principle can withstand." Hence the necessity of connecting with every system of Education, sound moral and religious instruction.

If this be allowed, and I suppose it will scarcely be disputed, the practical question at once arises,—In what way can this instruction be most efficiently imparted, without undue interference with the religious peculiarities of conflicting sects?

The difficulty, admitted on all hands to exist, in effecting such an object, is not confined to this country, nor is it *altogether* connected with the existence of an Established Church. In the United States, the intelligent Editor of the American Annals tells us, "there are parties in Education as well as in politics. We have Radicals (he says) who would pull down every thing; Conservatives who allow no change; and Reformers who try to avoid the errors of both: and we (he adds) probably should be assigned to each of these parties by different individuals. There is also an anti-religious party; and a non-religious party,—who unwittingly favor the first, by leaving out all religion in Education; and a religious party, who believe, as we have declared ourselves to believe, from our first address to this time, that while theology cannot be taught in a common school, religion must be the foundation and top-stone of Education; that the Bible should be studied more diligently than any other volume, and that *the spirit of religion* should pervade even the common school."

In England, no one, so far as I am aware, *avowedly* opposes religious instruction. Hostility to religion with us, generally shields itself under a cloak of hypocrisy. Our *avowed* differences, relate merely to the *kind* of religious instruction which shall be given, and to the *mode* in which it shall be imparted. Three methods of meeting the difficulty have been proposed:—

I. To compel all to be Educated in the principles of the National Church.

II. To separate altogether secular from religious instruction, confining the Schoolmaster to the former, and leaving the latter to be imparted by clergymen of different persuasions.

III. To limit religious instruction in the Schools to the reading and teaching of Holy Scripture.

The *first* of these plans rests the validity of religious instruction on the communication of THE SYMBOL; the *second* throws all responsibility as to spiritual matters into the hands of THE PRIEST; the *last* trusts implicitly to instruction in THE BIBLE. Under these three general heads we shall briefly notice the systems which they respectively designate.

I. INSTRUCTION IN THE SYMBOL. I do not mean to say that the party represented by the Symbol, advocate instruction in the Catechism *alone*. It would be very unjust, (however indirectly it might be done,) to charge so large a section of the Established Church, with placing their formularies *above* the Bible. The term is simply intended to indicate, that the communication of the Catechism,—the Symbol of their faith, is *the point* on which they take their stand, and by which they are distinguished from others. Maintaining that the Established Church is the Church of the Nation, they hold that the instruction given in National Schools ought to include, *in addition to the Bible,* that particular system of theology which is presented in their creeds and Catechisms; and hence, they tell us, they cannot and will not support any other.

Now the one grand objection which is brought against this scheme, and which appears to me to be fatal to it, is that *it is inconsistent with the first principles of religious liberty.* It shuts the School-door against the child of every conscientious dissenter. The terms of admittance cannot be submitted to.

I know that it has been stated by the Rev. Mr. Wigram, and others, that "many children of dissenters do actually find their way into the National Schools, and receive instruction, without any objection on their part or the part of their parents,—" and the statement is, I doubt not, to some extent correct. But, let us see what it involves. The parties referred to, call themselves dissenters. If they are so, only in name, and not in fact;—if their children have been baptized in the Established Church, and they themselves have no conscientious objection to its Catechism,—there is, of course, no difficulty; but then the argument deduced from the attendance of such children is worth nothing, inasmuch as the parties, though *separatists,* are, after all, *not* dissenters.

Let it be supposed, however, that these persons really are *non-conformists on principle,* in faith and practice, but, for the sake of securing to their children the secular Education of the School, submit to the imposition of the Catechism—and what an awful system of hypocrisy and profanity has then commenced! What a demoralizing process is going on! Into what a terrible School is the poor child introduced! I cannot contemplate such a state of things becoming universal without feelings of horror, and I do earnestly entreat candid and conscientious churchmen to pause for a moment, and after examining all the consequences of a system like this, to say whether they can really wish its continuance.

There are in England and Wales about 4000 places of worship belonging to Congregationalists alone, including Independents and Baptists. A large number of persons attending these places of worship are poor, and, of course, anxious to

obtain instruction for their children at as little cost as possible. Suppose, then, a Public School to be established on the principle under consideration, in a neighbourhood in which these persons abound. The doors are thrown open,—all alike are invited to attend; but instruction in the Church Catechism is to form part of the usual routine of the School. What follows, shall be described by an attached member of the Church of England, justly indignant at this abuse of her formularies: "The opening question of the Catechism is put, and the child is asked where and by whom he received his name. He answers, at his Baptism, by his Godfathers and Godmothers, who promised and vowed three things in his name. But, in the case of many dissenters the child has never been baptised, or if it has, had no Godfathers or Godmothers to promise and vow in its name. Yet these facts are never ascertained, and whether true or not, the children are, one and all, taught to repeat these answers, *as if they were so.* Is this the way, I would ask, by which children are to be impressed with correct and distinct views on religious subjects, by actually teaching them to give answers, which in reference to themselves, are untrue? If it was our desire to instil into the minds of the children, that sincerity in religious belief was unnecessary, and that doctrinal Catechisms were nothing more than forms of words, a more happy method could not be adopted. It is indeed a discovery that, in the inculcation of distinctness of doctrine and of a settled faith, *conscience cannot be satisfied without insisting on the habitual practice of daily lying.*"*

This is strong language; let it be remembered, however, that it is not the language of a dissenter, but of one who, in the same pamphlet, says, "As a member of the Church of England, I believe that its doctrines, compared with others, are the truest and purest deduced from the

* Apology for Parochial Education on Comprehensive Principles, by Augustus Smith, Esq.

Bible. Deeply, however, as I am impressed with the excellence of the doctrines of our church, I yet can never consent to exalt her Catechisms and rituals above the Scriptures, on which they are founded, neither can I venture to hold up the teaching of these formularies as 'the one thing needful.' They may be admirable and useful assistants, as the works of able and pious men, in explaining the tenets of our church to its juvenile members; but the magnifying their importance so much, as almost to place them on a level with the Scriptures themselves, and practically to use the latter as only explanatory of the former, is robbing the written Word of God of its true dignity and proper office, and must introduce a most dangerous and encroaching precedent of establishing human authority for divine. '*Which is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold? The gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift?*'"

I do earnestly commend these sentiments to the serious consideration of those members of the Established Church who still cling to the notion that Schools for the nation must include instruction in the formularies of the National Church. The amount of evil involved is by no means over-rated. It is *impossible* to teach the Church Catechism to the child of a dissenter, without confounding all its ideas of right and wrong; without placing the teacher and the parent in antagonist positions; without leading the child to suppose that religion is, after all, only a matter of forms and words; and without, in fact, *teaching* him, that he may lawfully profess a faith from which he actually dissents.

Mr. Wigram is wrong, however, in supposing that dissenting parents are generally so indifferent to the moral welfare of their children, as to allow such an experiment to be tried. I have in my possession, upwards of a hundred letters received from different parts of the country on this very subject. These communications detail various acts of petty persecution, some of them of an aggravated character,

arising out of resistence to this state of things. The facts therein stated, never *have* seen the light, and probably never will; their publication would only irritate and alienate still more those who are already far too much apart. Besides, the Church of England, as an institution, is not to be made responsible for the acts of individuals, who, having established Schools by voluntary subscription, have an undoubted right to conduct them on any principles they please.

I proceed, therefore, briefly to notice an argument which is sometimes advanced it this discussion, and which is considered by many to have great weight,—I mean that which defends the introduction of the Catechism on the ground of conscience. It is usually put in this kind of way: "You dissenters ask for the Bible to satisfy *your* consciences in the communication of religious instruction in Schools. We churchmen, *on the same ground*, ask for the Catechism. Our consciences are, surely, as worthy of regard as yours."

Now, passing by the assumption which is here made, that the question is one betwixt Churchmen and Dissenters, (which it really is not,) the reply is at hand. We do *not* ask for the Bible simply because we believe it to be the inspired Word of God, firmly as we hold such belief, but because, being a book recognized as divine by all religious denominations,—the book on which the laws and morals of the country are alike based, its admission into Schools does not involve the violation of any man's conscience. We oppose the introduction of *the Church Catechism* only because it cannot be introduced without such violation of conscience. We do not ask the admission of *our several Catechisms*, since that would equally involve the principle of religious consistency. We claim the Bible *as the common foundation* on which all our denominations rest; as the groundwork of all our creeds; as the book, a knowledge of which is necessary, in order to enable mankind to judge of the merits of conflicting creeds; without which they can never be in a position

to decide betwixt truth and error;—and the perusal of which by children cannot reasonably be complained of by any, so long as those who disapprove are allowed to enjoy all the secular advantages of the School apart from its imposition.

Some have supposed that the difficulty might be met by requiring the Schoolmaster to teach the Catechism to the children of churchmen only, but this plan, it is easily seen, would not materially remove the difficulty. The dissenter would still be taxed for the teaching of a formulary which he considers to be, in some important respects, contrary to Divine Truth; and, although the children of all sects might, in this case, attend the School, the teacher must be either a member of the Church of England, or a man of no religious sentiments whatever. Like all other religious tests, this would admit the unprincipled, but exclude the conscientious. Besides, if one Catechism were introduced, others would soon follow, and then, in many districts we should have the same teacher inculcating the peculiarities of the Church of England; the views of Orthodox Dissenters; the doctrines of Unitarianism; and the rites of Popery. Let the system of the Symbol be modified as it may, it can never become, in any extended sense of the term, National.

II. The Instruction of the Priest. The propriety of designating, under this term, a system which proposes to separate altogether secular from religious instruction, confining the Schoolmaster to the former and leaving the latter entirely to the Clergyman, may, perhaps, at first sight be questioned. On further examination, however, the classification will be found to be appropriate, since the plan, as explained by its advocates, proceeds on the assumption that the Schoolmaster is unfit to communicate religious instruction, and recognizes the right of the clergy of different denominations to its exclusive regulation.

I have already attempted to shew, in another place, that a

system like this, excluding as it necessarily does, the Bible from the regular intellectual instruction of the Schools of England, is in the present state of parties *absolutely impracticable,* inasmuch as it is opposed to the convictions of at least thirty-nine fortieths of the community. It is only necessary to add, that *the whole scheme proceeds on erroneous views of the nature of religion.*

The christian religion is *not* a system of dogmas which are to be received into the mind apart from moral considerations, and which may be separated from the practical and every-day business of life; on the contrary, the object, the sole end of christianity is, "our sanctification." A religion which does not effect this, and which consequently does not come home to men's business and bosoms, is a mere superstition, since in no rational or salutary form can it regulate the economy of life. Mr. Simpson of Edinburgh, the most zealous advocate of this separating system, would, confine the Schoolmaster to the inculcation of natural morality alone; but another not less eloquent or less influential friend puts the matter differently. He says, "it is acknowledged that religion must be the ground-work of all moral Education, but let each *engraft his belief* on the basis of practical christianity." Here the false views of religion, to which I have adverted, are fully developed. Our objection to them may be stated in few words. Christianity is a revelation of *mercy* to mankind. It is God speaking, not to angels or unfallen creatures, but to sinners; and its first demand is, that they should accept "the message of reconciliation." Hence, there cannot be any such thing as true virtue, apart from belief in the doctrines of the gospel. Faith is the parent of Holiness, and virtue the result of belief. Every *precept* is based upon the recognition of this great fact. Strip the Bible of this peculiarity, (and you do so, whenever you attempt to separate the precepts of Scripture, from those motives and sanctions which are to be found only in the doctrines of Scripture,) and it is no longer adapted

to the present condition of human nature. You have shorn it of its strength;—you have robbed it of the noblest thoughts that were ever presented to the intellect of man.

Nor would the probable working of the religious part of the scheme materially alleviate the mischief. Taught apart, like a speculative science, religion would soon become distasteful and odious to the children;—conducted on the principle of *self-defence* by the clergy it would necessarily partake of a dogmatic and sectarian character;—affording the finest opportunity for proselytism, and offering a constant temptation to the exercise of this kind of influence, it would in many instances lead to heart-burnings and jealousies of the most painful character;—proceeding on the false supposition that clergymen of the Established Church and dissenting ministers *either could or would* attend the Schools, it would very soon lead to the abandoning of the children to the designing and the bigoted;—under the pretext of preventing sectarianism it would aggravate and promote it;—and it would indisputably end, in the entire and permanent separation of the children of different sects, who would be educated by the funds of their respective denominations. "The methodists of Illinois," we are informed by the Editor of the American Annals, "propose to organize their conference into a Common School Education Society, and to establish Schools under the direction of teachers of their own denomination." The Editor adds, "if the anti-religious party of our country succeed in banishing the Bible from our common Schools, they will compel other denominations to take the same course." Human nature is the same in England as in America; similar courses will produce similar results.

III. The Instruction of the Bible. Having disposed of other methods for meeting the religious difficulty as unsatisfactory and impracticable, we are brought round to

that which it is the object of this pamphlet to advocate, viz. confining religious instruction to the reading and teaching of Holy Scripture. I am aware that to this plan an objection is sometimes taken at the very outset, which, if valid, would be fatal to its pretensions, viz. that it also is inconsistent with entire liberty of conscience; since it appears to admit that the magistrate may, under some circumstances, decide the question, What is truth? and further compel those who differ from him to aid in the propagation of his views. As a good deal of misapprehension prevails in some quarters on this subject, I shall, I trust, be excused if I devote more space to its consideration, than, under other circumstances, might be thought necessary.

By "the magistrate deciding betwixt truth and error," I understand his doing something which directly or indirectly amounts to "an official judgment ascribing truth to one sect and denying it to another."* To affirm that the civil power ought not to favor either the Bible or Christianity, is simply to affirm that Government should not recognize any religion as being *in fact* the religion of the English people, and consequently that a great part of the common law of the land should be made void. CHRISTIANITY, apart from any ecclesiastical establishment *is*, both in this country and in the United States of America, according to the decisions of the most eminent jurists, in a certain sense, part and parcel of the law of the land.† And if it were not so,—if the truth of Christianity were not recognized,—I see no basis on which legislation for the preservation of public morals could proceed. For although it be true, that "civil society is not an institution

* Dick on Ecclesiastical Polity.

† At the Convention of 1821, for amending the Constitution of the State of New York, on the question being put that "the judiciary shall not declare any particular religion to be the law of the land," Mr. Root contended, that the Supreme Court had brought into this State the common law of England. Indictments had been sustained for blasphemy, particularly in the county of Herkimer and in the county of Washington, as

peculiar to, or derived from any one form of religion," it is equally certain from all experience, that no civil society can

contained in Johnson's Reports. In the latter case it had been declared that Christianity was a part of the law of the land, &c. &c.

Chancellor Kent said that the gentleman from Delaware, (Mr. Root) had not stated correctly the decision of the Supreme Court which he arraigned. The Court considered blasphemous words uttered, with malicious intent, a breach of public morals, and an offence against public decency. They were indictable on the same principle as the act of wantonly going naked or committing impure and indecent acts in the public streets. It was not because Christianity was established by law, but because Christianity was *in fact* the *religion of the country, the rule of our faith and practice, and the basis of the public morals.* The authors of our Constitution never meant to extirpate Christianity more than they meant to extirpate public decency. It is in a degree recognized by the statute for the observance of the Lord's-day, and for the mode of administering oaths. The reasons of the judgment are in print and before the public, and to them he referred. The Court never intended to interfere with any religious creeds or sects, or with religious discussions. They meant to preserve, so far as it came within their cognizance, *the morals of the country which rested on Christianity as their foundation.* The act concerning oaths, contained the only test or belief ever required of a witness, which was that he believed in *the existence of a supreme being and a future state of rewards and punishments.*

In the course of another debate Chancellor Kent stated, that in the case of "The People, *v.* Ruggles, in viii. Johnson's Reports, he never intended to declare Christianity the legal religion of the State, because that would be considering Christianity as the established religion, and make it a civil or political institution. But Christianity was *in fact* the religion of the people of this State, and that fact was the principle of the decision. The Christian religion was the foundation of all belief and expectation of a future state, and the source and security of moral obligation. The legislature had repeatedly recognized the Christian Religion, not as the religion of the country established by law, but as being in truth the actual religion of the people of this State. The statute directing the administration of an oath, referred to the Bible as a sanction to it, and *on the ground that the Bible was a volume of divine inspiration.* In this sense we may consider the duties and injunctions of the Christian Religion as interwoven with the law of the land, and as part and parcel of the common law."

"Chief Justice Spencer entered into a full discussion of the question, whether the Christian Religion is a part of the law of the land, and declared it to be his decided and deliberate opinion that it was. In support of his views, he adduced several decisions in Courts of Justice where the principle he contended for, was recognized."

"Chancellor Kent believed there was partly an error on this subject. In one sense the Christian Religion was a part of the law of the land,—it was

long exist, fulfilling its proper end, viz: "the civil peace and prosperity, or the preservation of the society, and every member thereof in a free and peaceable enjoyment of all the good things of this life that belong to each of them,"* without a code of laws, in conformity with, and sanctioned by the religion of the community, be that religion true or false.

In framing such laws, all magistrates in all countries, and at all times, are obliged to recognize that religion which is, *in fact*, the religion of the people over which they rule. A moments' reflection will suffice to show, that the idea of a

so interwoven with our institutions, sentiments and feelings, that it was in effect recognized as a part of the law of the land; but it forms no part of our political institutions."

At the first sitting of this Convention, on the motion of Gen. S. Van Rensselaer, the Secretaries were directed to wait on the clergy of this city and procure one of them on each morning to open the Sittings of the Convention with prayer. *(Official Report, New York,* 1822.*)*

Blackstone, in discussing the nature of laws in general, observes:

"Divine Providence, in compassion to the frailty, the imperfection and the blindness of human reason, hath been pleased at sundry times and in divers manners, to discover and enforce its laws, by an immediate and direct revelation. The doctrines thus delivered, we call the revealed or divine law, and they are to be found only in the Holy Scriptures. These precepts when revealed are found upon comparison to be really a part of the original law of nature, as they tend in all their consequences to man's felicity. But we are not from thence to conclude that the knowledge of these truths was attainable by reason in its present corrupted state; since we find that, until they were revealed they were hid from the wisdom of ages. As then, the moral precepts of this law, are indeed of the same original with those of the law of nature, so their intrinsic obligation is of equal strength and perpetuity. Yet undoubtedly the revealed law is of infinitely more authenticity than that moral system which is framed by ethical writers and denominated the natural law. Because one is the law of nature, expressly declared so to be by God himself; the other is only what, by the assistance of human reason, we imagine to be that law. If we could be as certain of the latter as we are of the former, both would have an equal authority; but till then they can never be put in any competition together. *Upon these two foundations,—the law of nature and the law of revelation depend all human laws;* that is to say, no human laws should be suffered to contradict these." In Book iv. Ch. 4, on Public Wrongs, he distinctly asserts that "Christianity is part of the laws of England."

* Locke on Government.

king or Government, acting as Christ's vicegerent, (without the omnipotence of Christ), or even as the father of a family (without the absolute authority which God and man alike give to the parent over minors), and in this character providing religious instruction, not at his own cost (as the head of a household must do) but at the cost of his people; and doing this in opposition to their views of truth, if he deems those views to be erroneous,—is the wildest dream that ever entered a human mind. Such a course would be impracticable even under an unmixed despotism, for no despot yet was ever strong enough thus to mock the religious feelings of those over whom he ruled.* Hence, if it were possible to suppose the election of a truly Christian man as the chief magistrate of a people strongly attached to Mohammedanism, every one knows and feels that in this position he would have no power to select and establish the true religion. He must either recognize the Koran as the basis of public morals, or resign an office for which he was utterly disqualified.

Taking it for granted then, that the legislature of a *Christian* country (by which I mean a country, the inhabitants of which, are professedly Christians) must of necessity assume the truth of Christianity, it is only necessary to show, that the simple introduction of the Bible into Schools, does not favor one sect or prejudice another. But this is self evident; since the magistrate does no more than express his conviction that the Bible is a suitable book to be read by youth. He gives no opinion as to the particular scheme of theology which should be deduced therefrom. He does not meddle with matters which must be settled at other times, and in other places, by the judgment of the individual, or by the exposition of the sect.

It may indeed be said, that as there are conflicting versions of the Bible, the magistrate by circulating the authorized one does, in effect, decide upon translations, a matter which, on

* Letter on Education in the West Indies.

the principles of voluntary churchmen, is quite as much out of his province as the settlement of any other point of controversy. This, however, is a literary rather than a religious difficulty; it is a case of criticism rather than of conscience. The translation, or collation of different translations of scripture, recently made under the superintendence of the Commissioners for the Education of the poor of Ireland, comprising a large portion of the sacred volume, is sufficient to show how trifling after all, are the points of difference as to the text, when fairly considered, with a view to common use, by the Catholic, the Unitarian, and the Orthodox Protestant. After this publication, I do not see how it can ever be pretended, that for the magistrate to sanction the authorized translation is to violate the *conscience* either of the Unitarian or the Catholic. That it would be very unjust and tyrannical to require the child of either to read the authorized version as the price of its education,—to make this the test of its admission to schools established for the nation, I freely admit, and do not for a moment argue in favor of a course, which I should esteem a violation of Christian equity. But this is not the question under discussion.

II. That the establishment, by Government, of Schools of scriptural instruction interferes with no man's religious liberty, by requiring him to pay for the propagation of opinions *which he conscientiously disapproves,* appears to me equally plain.

With the exception of certain trifling differences as to translation, which have already been adverted to, the *religious* portion of the community agree in receiving the Bible as the Word of God; *their* consciences, therefore, are not wounded by its introduction into Schools. The *irreligious* man is not in a position to plead conscience. *His* objection does not arise from that, *which alone claims regard, because it alone justifies resistance to law,*—THE RECOGNITION OF

HIGHER AUTHORITY IN MATTERS OF RELIGION; but from a disbelief in God and religion altogether. He, therefore, having done all he can to oppose the circulation of the offensive book, must, of necessity, submit to his lot, just as he would to a rate for the poor or the highway.

The position of the Jew is somewhat different. Few in number, this singular people may yet be divided into three classes:—those who approve of Christianity, but, either from pride or national feeling, will not avow their conviction; those who are totally indifferent to Religion altogether; and those who conscientiously cling to the faith of their fathers. The first of these classes have at heart no objection to the Christian Scriptures; the second come under the denomination of the irreligious, and must be treated as others in the same predicament; the last are aliens. Strangers in a strange land, they can have no sympathy in common with the community among which they live. They dwell apart, and they must be dealt with as a distinct people.

With an individual objecting to the introduction of the Bible on the ground under consideration, I should, therefore, briefly reason thus: 'Government, in establishing Schools of *Scriptural* Instruction, does not trench on ground which you consider *tabooed* to legislators. That which applies to the sect and to the creed, does not apply to Christianity and to the Bible. The book, and the exposition of the book, are two distinct things. The State cannot, *on your principles*, support either one sect or rival sects,—it is forbidden to sanction, in any way, either one creed or many creeds; but, *on the same principles*, it not only may, but *must* admit both the Bible and Christianity in the general, as being, *in fact*, the religion of the people and the basis of public morals: otherwise it ceases to have the power to do that which, on your own shewing, is its only duty in relation to religion, viz. "to frame its laws so as to secure to its subjects entire

freedom of religious worship, and every facility for the performance of concomitant duties."* It cannot keep society together, without enactments in support of public morals; it cannot legislate without a system of ethics; and since no one will pretend that it should revert to Paganism, or Judaism, or Mohammedanism, it can only act by assuming the truth of Christianity and the authority of the Bible. The distinction is obvious, between Christianity and the Sect, the Bible and the Creed, the Book and its Interpretation.†

It has been the policy of priests, and bigots, and persecutors, in all ages, to insist that no such distinction can be maintained. It has been the interest of sceptics and of statesmen to echo the assertion. We cannot but acknowledge that these men are wise in their generation;—the subtlety of the serpent has not forsaken them. A fair and full recognition of the majesty of the Bible, and the right of private judgment, is as fatal to irreligion, as it is to priestcraft and superstition. "Commit to an Atheist the erection of a Commonwealth, and he will assume without scruple the control of religion, because he thinks God a dream, and conscience a prejudice. Such a man, *owning no rights of conscience*, yet unable to cure his subjects of their religious propensities, will make provision for giving them indulgence according to his own ideas of what is pleasing and politic. He will, therefore,

* Dick on Ecclesiastical Polity.

† Whether by declaring Christianity to be the law of the land, (according to Chief Justice Spencer,) or by undertaking to punish blasphemy on the ground of Christianity being, *in fact*, the religion of the country, (according to Chancellor Kent,) the Americans have *established* Christianity in the State of New York, may perhaps be doubtful. It is sufficient for our purpose to shew, that the distinction attempted to be made between Christianity in the general, and the views of any particular sect of Christians is not imaginary. It is not like attempting to draw a distinction between man in the abstract, and man as composed of bones, flesh, and sinews; it is rather to be illustrated by the distinction, which obtains between man in the general, and any particular tribe of men, having their own particular colour and form of feature.

erect and set in motion a kind of religious pageant. Hence, two great authorities, Hall and Mackintosh, have pronounced a Hobbist to be the only consistent persecutor."*

The safeguard of freedom is the Christian Scriptures. The great and golden rule for governors in relation to religion, —*Protect and let alone,* is a simple deduction from the Bible. A truth like this, natural morality never taught; the human mind was incapable of such a conception,—it is as foreign to its nature, as it is superior to its capacity. The offspring of pure and unadulterated christianity, it cannot *exist* apart from its parent; it can only be developed, in proportion as the Bible is separated from the creed, truth from a human system, religion from the science of theology. To maintain, therefore, as some do, that a Government adopting the rule of simple protection, cannot recognize either Christianity in the general, or the Bible, as the standard of faith and morals, is to caricature the claims of conscience, and to place liberty in an antagonist position with the very charter to which she owes her birth.

The notion of Mr. Simpson, of Edinburgh, that, to avoid religious disputes in Schools, the Schoolmaster should be confined to the inculcation of "natural morality alone, shewing (his pupils) that it has a natural origin in their own constitution, and in the relation of that constitution to external creation,"—leaving all other reasons for obedience to the clergyman, who shall be admitted at a fixed hour to teach revealed religion,—is in my view monstrous. The child is found guilty of falsehood; he is to be rebuked, and, if possible, brought to repentance. But how? By telling him, I suppose, that a lie is inconvenient,—that it occasions trouble, that it is opposed "to his own constitution, and to the relation of that constitution to external creation." But the child thinks, (whatever he may choose to say) that a lie is

* Dick on Ecclesiastical Polity.

useful,—it has saved him from punishment before, and he intends that, if possible, it shall do so again. Will any lesson drawn from natural morality alone, convince him of the contrary? Will it avail, under circumstances like these, to talk to a child about truth having a natural origin in its own constitution? The idea is absurd.

But suppose this kind of lecture to answer the end, and that the child is convinced and reforms; what lesson has been inculcated? Plainly this,—that the Bible and Christianity are not necessary to preserve virtue in the earth. And what is the direct, the unavoidable inference? Why, that the whole is a prejudice, a superstition, a piece of priestcraft. Yet this is what we *must* come to, in a system of National Education, if we once allow that Government cannot equitably assume the truth of Christianity.

That such a system, under any circumstances, could be permanent is impossible. Public sentiment, like the pendulum, ever swinging from one extreme to the other, would bring us back to Creeds and Catechisms; old controversies would spring up with new vigour, and we should again discover that no consistent resting-place is to be found apart from the recognition of the Bible.

The necessity of satisfying the public mind, as to the principles on which the Governments of the earth may, without injustice, promote the moral and religious Education of their subjects, is becoming every day more apparent. The nations of Europe already sigh to be redeemed from the bondage of priestcraft; but men cannot be governed without the restraints of religion. Hence we hear Cousin, the philosopher, exclaiming before all France, "The popular Schools of a nation ought to be imbued with the religious spirit of that nation. Christianity is or is not the religion of the people of France. It cannot be denied that it is. I ask then, is it our object to respect or to destroy it? If we mean to set

about destroying it, then I allow we ought by no means to have it taught in the people's Schools. But if the object we propose to ourselves is totally different, we must teach our children that religion which civilized our fathers; that religion, whose liberal spirit prepared and can alone sustain all the great institutions of modern times. The Schoolmaster, therefore, must be prepared to give adequate religious instruction. The less we desire our Schools to be ecclesiastical the more must they be Christian. Religion is, in my eyes, the best,—perhaps the only basis of popular instruction." Hence, in Prussia, we are told, "the modern reformers of the Schools insist upon securing to religion a respectable place among the branches of knowledge to be taught in elementary Schools. Children, they say, judge commonly of the importance of any branch of knowledge according to the time assigned to giving instruction in it, and the industry with which it is treated; and for that reason alone religion ought to obtain the first place, and other branches ought to be brought into connection with it as often as possible." Hence, too, a voice from America, uttered by one who will not be suspected of narrow or bigoted views: "There is an atheistical plan which forbids the entrance of the Bible into multitudes of our Schools; and under the pretence of excluding sectarianism, shuts out Christianity, and establishes the influence of a single sect, who would dethrone the Creator, and break every bond of social order." And again, "If it be true, as many parents say, that our common Schools are becoming dangerous to the morals of children, and if, at the same time, religious instruction be obviously disappearing, it should be our earnest enquiry, not merely as the friends of Education, but as the friends of our country, and her dearest institutions and rights, to enquire whether the one may not be the natural result and consequence of the other. I would not, for a moment, propose the question whether theology ought

to be taught in our Schools. Against this I should be the foremost to protest. The question is merely whether, as a matter of policy or safety to the community, the study of the Bible shall be excluded from a child's course of instruction during six days out of seven of his life. What inference must be drawn from this, concerning the importance of that book, compared with others on which he is obliged to spend so much time and labor."*

This is the language of common sense; it comes from no bigot,—from no advocate of Church establishments; it is the honest avowal of a man of most Catholic spirit,—a republican, and "a voluntary." Happy would it have been for France, if Cousin, instead of concluding his noble appeal with a hollow acknowledgment of the *right* of the clergy to superintend religious instruction, and the duty of entrusting it to them, had boldly adopted sentiments far more in accordance with his own vigorous understanding and enlarged heart, and advocated a free and unfettered system of Bible instruction. Then, instead of seeing, as we now do in France, the outward forms of an *effete* superstition, scarcely veiling the scepticism of a cold and heartless philosophy, we might have hoped to witness, in the majestic language of Milton, "a noble and puissant nation rousing herself, like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks; as an eagle mewing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eye at the mid-day beam, purging and unscaling her long abused sight, at the fountain itself of heavenly radiance."

The remark of Cousin, that "*the less we desire our Schools to be ecclesiastical, the more must they be Christian,*" is worthy of the deepest attention; it is the observation of a profound thinker,—a man of enlarged views,—a philosopher, and a politician. The converse is equally true; the less we make our Schools Christian, the surer and the sooner too

* Woodbridge.

will they become ecclesiastical. Infidelity always favors priestcraft, just as priestcraft again favors infidelity. The only remedy for both these forms of error, and, indeed, for every form of error, is to be found in an enlarged acquaintance with the sacred Scriptures.

Strongly, however, as I feel the importance of the views I have been advocating, and deeply anxious as I am for their prevalence in the community, I wish it to be distinctly understood, that I have no sympathy whatever with those who, on this account, justify the *compulsory* reading of Scripture. I cannot conceive of any circumstances under which compulsion can be useful in the furtherance of religious truth. The mind can never be forced, and truth can gain nothing by the support of any power which does not add to its evidence. To my mind it is of very little consequence whether the objection which a parent may make to his child reading the Bible, is or is not to be traced to the influence of the priest. If the parent object, whatever be the ground of the objection, his scruples ought to be regarded. "There is ONE that judgeth, even the Lord." Father, and child, and Priest, will one day stand together at His bar. Who is man, that he should dare to usurp the Throne of the Highest, or venture to inflict punishment on his fellow criminal for disobedience to a law, from the curse of which he himself needs to be redeemed?

SECTION IV.

THE UNIVERSAL TEXT BOOK.

The surprising power which the Christian Religion exercises, in the invigoration of *the intellectual faculties* of ignorant persons, when they become *really interested* in its sublime discoveries, has frequently been observed with wonder and delight, by those who have been accustomed to watch the progress of Divine Truth among the humbler classes of society. Instances occur from time to time, to the delight of the Christian philanthropist, in which persons "brought up in utter ignorance and barbarian rudeness, and so continuing until late, sometimes very late in life, have at last, after such a length of time, and when habit has completed its petrifying effect, suddenly been seized upon by a mysterious power, and taken with an alarming and irresistable force out of the dark hold in which the spirit has lain imprisoned and torpid, into the sphere of thought and feeling. It is exceedingly striking to observe how, under these circumstances, the contracted rigid soul seems to soften, and grow warm, and expand, and quiver with life. With the new energy infused, it painfully struggles to work itself into freedom from the wretched contortion in which it has so long been fixed as by the impressed spell of some infernal magic. It is seen, *filled with a distressed and indignant emotion at its own ignorance; actuated with a restless earnestness to be informed; acquiring an unwonted pliancy of its faculties to thought;* attaining a perception, combined of intelligence and moral sensibility, to which numerous things are becoming discernible and affecting that were as non-existent before. We have known instances in which the change, *the intellectual change,* has been so conspicuous within a brief space of time, that even an infidel observer must have forfeited all claim to be a

man of sense, if he would not acknowledge,—'this that you call Divine Grace, whatever it may really be, is the strangest awakener of faculties after all.' And to a devout man, it is a spectacle of most enchanting beauty, thus to see the immortal plant, which has been under a malignant blast while sixty or seventy years have passed over it, coming out at length in the bloom of life."

I shall not attempt to add any thing to this beautiful and graphic description, as *true* as it is beautiful, beyond observing *first*, that the effect referred to, is precisely the opposite of that which is produced by superstition, which always represses and frequently condemns the free exercise of the intellect; and *secondly*, that wherever this transformation takes place, it is always effected, by and through the agency of one book,—THE BIBLE.

In claiming for this volume, a prominent place in all our elementary schools, I beg to invite the attention of the candid, to the following considerations:

I. *No book in existence contains so many* FACTS, *which it is important for a child to know, as the Bible.*

It has been remarked, and with great truth, that, "a person who has never attended to the subject, will on recollection, be surprised to find, for how large a proportion of his knowledge he is indebted to this neglected book." To it we are indebted for all our knowledge of the introduction of natural and moral evil into the world; for the only authentic accounts we possess of countries, which were the cradles of the human race;—for the history of the Jews; and for every important fact connected with the rise and early propagation of Christianity. It is the only book which informs us of the birth of the world; of the origin and infancy of its inhabitants; of their early character; of the deluge; of the dispersion; of the prevalence and intent of sacrifices; and of the hopes and

prospects which await mankind beyond the grave. Yet, (marvellous infatuation!) men are to be found, who regard this book in no other light, than as a professional manual of theology.

II. *No book is so well adapted to promote* INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPEMENT *as the Bible.*

I need not say, that large portions of it are singularly adapted to the comprehension of the young. No book excites a stronger interest in the youthful mind than the Bible, if it be properly read. The history of Joseph,—the Parable of the Prodigal Son, and almost all the narratives, whether of the Old or New Testament, are inimitable specimens of simplicity and wisdom. Every page is marked by a majesty and purity which belong to no other composition. The *whole volume* is at once exciting, expanding, and ennobling. And since the literature and antiquities of the ancient world; the geography and chronology,—the history, customs, and laws, of large portions of Asia, Europe, and Africa, are necessarily involved in its study, it is impossible for any man to be a diligent student of the book without purifying his taste, and enlarging his mind, as well as improving his heart.

III. *The Bible is pre-eminently a book of* "USEFUL KNOWLEDGE,"—the information it conveys, is adapted to the wants and circumstances of all classes of the community.

Without an acquaintance with this book, the *duties of a citizen* cannot properly be fulfilled. Acknowledged by the nation to be a book of the highest authority, and appealed to, as it is, in all our courts of justice, no man can justifiably take an oath who is ignorant of the book on which he swears. Sound *political knowledge*, in like manner, can never be obtained by a man who is ignorant of the Scriptures, for "the Bible furnishes *the only permanent basis for a just government.* It is the only book of universal authority, which contains the charter of the subjects rights—which prescribes

the limits of the ruler's power,—which dares to give law to the legislator, and denounces penalties against the sovereigns of the earth. It presents a King, who is above all kings; and a law which is paramount to every other law. It appoints a tribunal of appeal, to which the highest magistrate may be summoned, where power cannot overawe right, nor fraud pervert justice; and where the unjust judgment of the oppressor will be brought upon his own head." It is *the safeguard of freedom.* "The records of modern times do not present us with a single country blest with free institutions, on whose permanence and happy influence we can now rely, in which the influence of the Bible is not exerted. In proportion as that has been wanting, the spirit of despotism has maintained its sway, and ignorance and apathy and slavery have been the portion of the people."*

Again, viewed in relation to the influence which it has exercised, and is still exercising on the moral and social condition of man in all parts of the world, a knowledge of the Bible is necessary to any just conception either of the past or present condition of the species. Strange, indeed, must be the notions of that man who, under the shallow pretext of avoiding Sectarianism, would thrust into obscurity a volume, to which this country is indebted for every thing which distinguishes her from savage tribes;—the book which delivered her from idolatry, impurity and blood;—which has distinguished her from other nations, by making her foremost in philanthropy; and which has again and again saved her from discord, revolution, and crime. The only book which has had power from God to change the character of *nations;* which "abolished the bloody rites of Diana,—threw down the polluted temples of Venus,—terminated for ever the barbarous spectacles of Rome, and destroyed the blood-stained altars of the Druids;" the book which, *within the recollection of this generation and under our own observation,* has abolished

* Report to the Literary Convention of New York in 1830.

the sacrifice of parents and the murder of children among savage tribes in the wilds of Africa and in the islands of the Pacific; which has rescued the Hindoo infant from the Ganges and the Hindoo widow from the funeral pile; and before which, idolatry and superstition in every part of the world are tottering to their fall.

Apart then altogether from its religious character; viewed as the repository of such information only as uninspired men might communicate; regarded simply as a code of practical wisdom,—as the storehouse of truths which are *capable of practical application every day and hour in the life of every individual,* it is obvious that the Bible, instead of being shut out of our places of instruction, *should be better understood and more thoroughly studied* than any other book whatsoever.

But this is *low* ground. Father of Lights! who "hast magnified thy word above all thy name," forgive the attempt to *apologize* for its perusal, and impute it not as sin. Almighty and Divine Redeemer! whose compassion, is the compassion of God, forgive the strange perversity, which, unaffected by "exceeding great and precious promises," and the prospect of "an eternal weight of glory," needs to be moved by temporal benefits, to listen to thy voice. O, Holy and Eternal Spirit! who alone canst "enrich with all utterance and knowledge," and who sendest out "thy seraphim with the hallowed fire of the altar to touch and purify the lips of whom thou pleasest," kindle throughout our land diviner appetites, and teach the people to love that book, which, mighty through thee, can alone control the turbulence of the will, calm the restlessness of the intellect, and satisfy the hunger of the heart.

It now only remains for me, very briefly to notice, some objections which have been urged against the use of the Bible as a school book, by those who are yet anxiously desirous that the whole community should be imbued with its sacred truths. They may, I think, for the most part, be compre-

hended under the two following general heads. *First*, that since a sufficient number of persons, competent to give instruction in the scriptures, cannot be found among those who are likely to assume the office of elementary teachers,—the Bible would fall into unsuitable hands, and be desecrated by the irreligious. *Secondly*, that familiarity with Scripture, impairs reverence; and consequently that to make the Bible a book of daily instruction for youth, is likely to lead to its neglect in after life.

To the first of these, it might be sufficient to reply, that, as the authority of the Bible is not derived from the countenance of man, so the contempt of man can never prevent its influence on the minds of those who read it. The supposed danger, however, is in great measure imaginary. One of the happiest effects, resulting from the Bible being taught in an elementary school is, that the teacher himself inevitably comes, in a greater or less degree under the influence of the book he teaches. It either makes him a better man, or it brings out his deficiencies so prominently, that, if the school be at all under public inspection, he is either obliged to resign his office, or his employers are constrained to seek some one else to occupy his place. *Nothing is so effectual in elevating the character of common school teachers, as demanding an intelligent acquaintance with the sacred Scriptures.*

The second objection proceeds on the assumption, that familiarity with the Bible produces contempt for it. But this we altogether deny. The opinion is opposed by a thousand facts. Far from finding the Bible revered most, by those who are least familiar with its contents, we invariably discover, on the contrary, that its most zealous friends and advocates are found among those who have been brought up in families where it is daily read. It *must* be so with a book, which is intended to act upon the heart through the medium of the intellect. The unintelligent and mysterious awe, with which

some persons regard the sacred Scriptures, is little adapted to subserve the great purposes, for which the Divine Being vouchsafed to reveal his will to the children of men. It can never be productive of a vigorous and healthy piety.

That the reading of the Bible *may* be made, and too frequently has been made, a dull and wearisome task, is indisputable. But if, on this account, we are to banish it from the range of elementary instruction, I fear we must go much further, and exclude *reading* altogether; for certainly, not the Bible only, but *literature itself* has hitherto, in many schools, been associated only with tears and punishment. These are evils, which have no *necessary* connection with Scriptural Instruction; they can only be removed by the gradual improvement of Education,—by the introduction of improved methods, and especially by the raising up of a higher and better class of elementary teachers.

For the absurdities of those, who would *confine* the Education of the labouring classes to *religious* instruction alone, I am not responsible. I have no sympathy with notions so narrow and so selfish. While I deeply regret the error of some, who, if they do not believe, certainly act, as if they believed, that the cause of depravity is to be found in misapprehensions of the understanding,—a doctrine which it will be time enough to receive, when there is actually as much virtue in the world as there is knowledge of its principles,—I yet cannot but believe that, as the Christian religion is singularly auspicious to the cultivation and enlargement of the intellectual faculties, so the improvement of those faculties, must, in its tendency and ultimate results, be favorable to religion. These views I consider perfectly consistent with a supreme regard for the sacred Scriptures; and it is in conformity with them, that I have ventured to advocate the entire recognition of the Bible in all our Schools, as THE ONLY REVELATION OF MERCY TO SINNERS,—AS THE BASIS OF ALL PRACTICAL VIRTUE—AS THE STATUTE BOOK OF HEAVEN.

APPENDIX.

BRIEF NOTES ON LORD BROUGHAM'S BILL.

SINCE the foregoing observations were penned, the Bill for promoting Education in England and Wales, recently brought forward by Lord Brougham, has been printed. A few brief remarks on such portions of it, as seem to bear on the sentiments which have been advanced in the present pamphlet, may not be altogether inappropriate. No one, I am sure, can be more desirous to see the measure thoroughly canvassed, than the Noble Lord to whom the country is indebted for its introduction.

The OBJECT of the Bill is thus stated,—"to provide for the more regular and beneficial application of the funds from time to time granted by Parliament in aid of Education;" also, "to extend the powers of Municipal Corporations, and of Parishes and Townships," in furtherance of the same end.

To effect these purposes, it is proposed to establish A BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, consisting of the Lord President of the Council, one of the principal Secretaries of State,—together with three other persons, to be *appointed* by the Crown, but not to be removed, except upon address of both Houses of Parliament.

The *powers* of the Commissioners may be classed under seven heads:—

I. To *receive* applications for aid in establishing or carrying on Infant and other Schools, Model Schools, and Seminaries for training Teachers; and *to distribute and apply* towards such Schools any funds granted by Parliament for such purposes, or vested in such Commissioners by pious and charitable persons.

II. To *establish* any such Schools and Seminaries, where no application for aid may be made, *according to their discretion, and according to such rules as they may from time to time make for their own guidance in the administration of such funds.*

III. To *enrol* such other Schools and Seminaries as may apply to be so enrolled; such Schools to be under the examination of the Board, until application shall be made by the parties to have the enrolment cancelled.

IV. To *appoint*, from time to time, any number of Inspectors, not exceeding ten at any one time, to examine into the state, &c. of all Schools and Seminaries thus established, aided or enrolled, and (by consent of parties) all other Schools and Seminaries whatsoever.

V. To *authorize* Town Councils to prepare plans, estimates, rules, regulations, &c. for the establishment of Schools, and (such plans, rules, &c. having been first submitted to the Commissioners and approved) to levy a Burgh rate of the amount specified in the fiat of the Commissioners, an-

nexed to their order of approval. After such approval it is not to be lawful for the said Town Council, or any other person or persons, body politic or corporate, to alter the said rules, regulations, &c., without the consent, in writing, of the said Commissioners.

VI. To *receive* application for enrolment from Mechanics' Institutes, &c., and to give to members of the same, certificates, of one or three years attendance thereat.

VII. To empower School Meetings, consisting of rate-payers, and of persons who have received certificates from the Board, to elect a School Committee of five, and through them to make a rate,—plans, estimates, rules, &c., having first been submitted to the Commissioners, and their fiat and order of approval having been obtained.

Provided always that the Holy Scriptures be read in all the Schools as a part of the reading, but Catholic and Jewish children not to be obliged to be present during their reading.

The Act not to extend to Scotland and Ireland.

Such is the general character of the Bill proposed to the consideration of Parliament by Lord Brougham,—the decided opponent, be it remembered, of all arbitrary measures in furtherance of Education,—the unsparing denouncer of the Prussian system as tyrannical, and altogether unfit for a free country,—the eloquent friend of voluntary societies,—and the enlightened advocate of unlimited freedom, both of thought and speech. Coming as it does, from a nobleman holding these opinions, it is fair to suppose that care has been taken to render its enactments as little compulsory as possible; to secure by its provisions the utmost possible amount of liberty to the conductors of Schools; to remove to the greatest possible distance all danger of Government control over the inculcation of opinions; to secure by every practicable means the minority from being oppressed by the majority; to guard, by suitable checks, against the encroachments of spiritual tyranny; and above all, to offer every possible inducement likely to ensure the continuance of that voluntary aid which is now, to an amount little suspected, bestowed on Education, and the beneficial results of which must be estimated, not so much by its pecuniary value, as by the amount of interest which it awakens in favor of the humbler classes of society. I say it is fair to suppose that to the points to which I have alluded, the attention of the noble and learned Lord has been anxiously directed; I believe that it *has* been so directed. I am satisfied that if, in consistency with the general principles of the Bill, more *could* have been done than has been done for the security of liberty, Lord Brougham would not only have been willing, but desirous to have proposed it. On this head the powerful speech which introduced the measure was particularly explicit and satisfactory.

Let us now look at the actual amount of power which, *by the Bill*, is placed in the hands of the Commissioners; I think we shall find that it amounts to nothing less than absolute control over the Education of the country, so far, at least, as that Education is promoted directly or indirectly by the public funds.

I. The Commissioners may establish Normal and other Schools *to any extent, and on any principles they please,* (Clause xxv. relating to the use of the Holy Scriptures, only excepted.) II. Not only may they assist with unlimited funds such Schools as conform to their views of Education, and withhold aid altogether from those who may object to the terms they offer, but, (subject, however, in this case to an appeal to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council,) they may refuse even enrolment, with all the privileges connected therewith, to any School, the regulations of which they may disapprove. III. In all cases where aid is rendered they may claim, under penalty, the right of inspection; teachers refusing to answer any question touching the same to be subject to a fine not exceeding twenty pounds. IV. For any thing that appears to the contrary, with the Commissioners is to rest *the appointment and removal of teachers,* an amount of power which, if on the one hand deemed necessary in order to secure appointments for the pupils in the Normal Schools, is, it must be allowed, (when viewed in connection with the fact that the Commissioners reserve to themselves the right of selecting and training these candidates,) very great to be deposited in the hands of any Board whatsoever. V. Finally, to them is committed the guardianship of religious liberty and the settlement of all religious differences, since, in the absence of any special provision, *they must decide when, and where, and under what circumstances, the Catechism of the Church of England shall or shall not be introduced.*

Now there are three aspects in which a measure like this may be viewed: I. In its relation to Government and public liberty. II. In connection with its probable influence on the general interests of Education. III. In its bearing on the present position and future prospects of the voluntary societies.

On the first of these heads, it may be sufficient to remark, that the possibility of danger is not to be overlooked. The Conservative party will of course look at the Bill with some jealousy as emanating from a Liberal. Let the Liberals in turn consider how far it would have met their approval had it proceeded from a Tory, and had there been a prospect of its being carried into effect, in the first instance at least, by a Conservative Administration. If it will not bear this test it is defective.

II. In noticing the probable effects of such a measure on the general interests of Education, the example of Connecticut must not be disregarded. Let it be remembered, that in circumstances in some respects resembling our own, the assumption by the State of too much responsibility, led, not only to a proportionate decay in local interest, but, which is far worse, to the destruction of the habit and sense of obligation on the part of the natural guardians of the child.

III. With the voluntary societies, so long as they do not come to Government for aid, the Bill does not interfere. It is obvious, however, that in proportion as schools are established by the board, those supported by public subscription will diminish. Let us see to it, therefore, that we do not by one imprudent act transfer all that is now contributed voluntarily to the

general taxation of the country. The localities, with so little power, may refuse to tax themselves, in which case the Commissioners can only establish schools out of the public funds. If a new burden of this kind should occasion discontent, it will not be easy to revert to voluntary subscriptions,—the habit of giving, will by that time have been destroyed.

I leave these few thoughts to the consideration of the friends of Education. I give no opinion as to the merits of the Bill. I hope it will be discussed in a calm and candid spirit. There can be but one opinion as to the patriotic intentions of Lord Brougham, however men may differ as to the desirableness of adopting the particular course now recommended. I am not prepared to say that a better course can be devised than the one suggested by Lord Brougham; every plan has difficulties peculiar to itself. An idea has, however, been thrown out in the last number of the British Critic, which strikes me as worthy of regard, *viz.*, the appointment of a Minister of Public Instruction, not indeed as Schoolmaster General of the kingdom; but to form a connecting link between the Government and the country; holding a *bureau* of central communication and general intercourse; the visitor for statistical purposes of all Public Seminaries and Educational Establishments; a collector of educational facts, and a depository of educational suggestions, with a view to the supply of deficiencies and the extension of benefits. If, under the control of such an officer of State, three working commissioners were appointed, one to represent the interests of the National Society,—one connected with the British and Foreign School Society, and one selected to represent the opinions of those gentlemen who are not disposed to approve of either, and if all applications for aid, whether from the two societies or elsewhere, were thoroughly investigated by them, I think that without the help of any penalties they might obtain access for their inspectors to almost every school in the kingdom,—might elevate and improve existing establishments, and, in connection with local effort, promote to an unlimited extent the opening of new ones. Understanding, as they would, the grounds on which Voluntary Subscriptions are offered, they would be able not only to secure the present amount of contributions, but to develop still more widely the benevolent resources of the country. Establishing Normal Schools, with a certainty of being able to provide for the teachers they might train, they would create no dissatisfaction and excite no jealousy; for, while on the one hand, they would strengthen the Voluntary Societies, they would on the other render every possible aid to localities taxing themselves for educational purposes, without demanding any interference of an irritating or vexatious character. The secret of their power would be moral influence; an influence derived from the enjoyment of public confidence previous to their appointment,—strengthened by the cordial support of their respective societies,—and unaffected by the jealousies and heart-burnings arising from the conflict of religious parties.

LONDON:
Printed by J. C. Kelly, 32, Houndsditch.